

Press Room



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 1, 2004

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Don't Let DUIs Crash the Holiday Season

December is California's Drunk & Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month

Sacramento, Calif.— Nothing brings the joy of the holiday season to a screeching halt faster than a DUI crash or arrest. Yet, some California party-goers still make the mistake of getting behind the wheel after consuming alcohol, putting themselves and other motorists at risk.

In observance of the state's annual Drunk and Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month, this December the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS), California Highway Patrol (CHP) and the California Restaurant Association (CRA) have partnered once again to remind Californians to celebrate responsibly during the holiday season.

"Holiday gatherings are an important part of celebrating the season," said Jot Condie, CRA president & CEO. "And being a responsible party host includes caring for the safety of your guests. From restaurant managers to office party coordinators, everyone can play a role in ensuring that guests celebrate in a sensible manner and make it home safely."

Last year, 1,445 people were killed and 31,337 were injured in alcohol-related crashes in California, compared to 1,416 fatalities and 32,041 injuries in 2002. To help reduce the number of DUI collisions and remove offenders from the state's roadways, this holiday season more than 300 law enforcement agencies will conduct a concentration of sobriety checkpoints statewide.

"Checkpoints and increased law enforcement patrols are proven DUI deterrents," said

Sunne Wright McPeak, Secretary of the California Business, Transportation and Housing Agency. "But an even stronger deterrent is taking the keys from a loved one after they've had too much drink. Working together we can all save lives and send a message that drinking and driving is not acceptable."

The OTS, CHP and CRA suggest the following tips for conducting safe and fun holiday celebrations:

- When guests arrive, find out who the designated driver is and go out of your way to thank them. You can give them drinks in special glasses so people know they're designated drivers.
- Collect car keys from others and start a money collection at the door for a taxi fund.
- Have a special bar set-aside for designated drivers, where guests can create their own alcohol-free drinks. Stock it with non-alcoholic mixers, including a variety of fruit juices, lemon-lime, club soda and alcohol-free ciders, wines and champagne. Keep plenty of fun garnishes on hand, too (like maraschino cherries, fresh sprigs of mint, whipped cream, candy canes and cinnamon sticks). Don't forget the festive stemware with sugar-flavored rims!
- Create your own "signature" non-alcoholic drinks or look for recipes online. Fruit juices are the perfect place to start.
- Have a contest to see who can make the best non-alcoholic drink, with your guests as judges. Award the winner with a bottle of non-alcoholic champagne.
- Go out of your way to praise and "check-up" on designated drivers. Thank them throughout the night for helping to keep your other guests safe.
- Serve plenty of great hors d'oeuvres or try a festive sorbet served in a martini glass. With so many fabulous treats to taste, guests won't be tempted to head straight for the bar.
- Plan activities to keep guests entertained. Great music, dancing, caroling or gift exchanges will make spirits bright, even without alcohol.
- Do not have an "open bar." Have a trusted friend act as bartender and pour appropriately.

- Insist that alcohol-impaired guests to stay the night.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Attached are sample non-alcoholic beverage recipes for inclusion in holiday articles during California's 3D Month, courtesy of CSAA's *Cheers!* program.

* Statistics based on California Highway Patrol 2003 provisional data.